

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

11 Dec 1980

Mr. William Cassidy
President
Intelligence Studies Foundation
Post Office Box 6865
Oakland, CA 94603

Dear Mr. Cassidy:

Your letter of 17 November 1980 to Admiral Turner has been referred to me for response. We appreciate your interest in the use of Office of Strategic Services records for historical research.

The OSS records in question were transferred to the National Archives and Records Service on 3 January 1980. In this transfer the following "specific restrictions" were imposed on release of information to the public:

- a. "Foreign Government Information must be afforded protection and will not be released without the prior approval of the government."
- b. "In keeping with the provisions of the Privacy Act, information concerning the affiliation of U.S. persons with OSS may not be released without the consent of the person involved."

These restrictions were accepted in writing by NARS as part of the transfer and the records were accessioned into Record Group 226.

With respect to privacy, we are sure you will appreciate that the unique nature of service with OSS weighs heavily when considering public access to information involving OSS personnel. We believe many persons affiliated with OSS would be caused no problems having this information available publicly--indeed, they would be proud to have their accomplishments known. However, for other former OSS personnel, particularly those still employed in intelligence or living or working overseas, revelation of their OSS affiliation could adversely affect their lives or those of their families and associates.

We want to be as helpful to scholars and researchers as our national security responsibilities will permit. If there should be any liberalization of our present policy, we will advise you.

Admiral Turner has expressed personal interest in this matter, and we previously have informed him of the issues involved. Your interest in the cause of intelligence and its importance to the security of our country continues to be appreciated.

Sincerely,

/s/

Thomas H. White
Director of Information Services
Directorate of Administration

DDA/OIS/RMD,



(11 December 1980)

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Distribution:

Original - Addressee

1 - OIS Subject

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1 - DDO/IMS

1 - RSB Subject: ~~OIS Records~~

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PENSE DATE

CROSS REFERENCE OR
POINT OF FILING

11/11/00

TO : DCI
FROM : William L. Cassidy, President,
SUBJ. Intelligence Studies Foundation
SUBJECT: Ltr to DCI re "OSS Operational
Records"

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To 6: For direct response.

Executive Secretary

21 Nov

INTELLIGENCE STUDIES FOUNDATION

POST OFFICE BOX 6865
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17 November 1980

Director,
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Washington, D C 20505

Dear Sir:

I write with reference to certain Office of Strategic Services records of considerable historical significance, which apparently now languish in the bureaucratic twilight between Central Intelligence Agency and the National Archives.

The material in question is variously described as "approximately 800 cubic feet" or "196 boxes" of "OSS Operational Records" delivered to NARS by a CIA records management component. I have discussed the status of these records with a representative of the Information and Privacy Coordinator, and with Mr John E Taylor of NARS. The problem which emerges is as follows.

In late 1979 the records were sent to NARS with instructions that they not be made available for public examination until "all persons mentioned therein who are still living" had been consulted. In the informally-expressed opinion of one member of the Information and Privacy Coordinator's staff, this instruction was "improper." In the opinion of Mr Taylor, expressive of a professional archivist's viewpoint, such instructions are wholly unacceptable.

NARS has apparently refused to accession the records to Record Group 226 until the matter of their status can be resolved by CIA records managers having a better grasp of the archival process than that now currently in evidence. I am informed, I hope reliably, that you are the only individual within CIA capable of making a decision in this matter as the records management component involved is unwilling to devote the effort necessary to bring the records under intellectual control.

While we realize that releasing OSS records takes a certain amount of courage from the security standpoint, we believe the benefits arising from the release of historical materials to responsible scholars and public custodians far out-weigh the risks. The Intelligence Studies Foundation, Incorporated, through its Board of Directors, therefore requests that you give this matter your personal attention and make an affirmative decision in favor of history.

Director,
Central Intelligence Agency
17 November 1980
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We believe that the timely and orderly release of OSS records to NARS will have both immediate and long-term beneficial results. The availability of such materials in the normal channels of scholarship will serve to lessen the volume of requests made under the Freedom of Information Act. Such availability will also serve to stimulate thoughtful analysis of the U S intelligence community and serve as an effective counter-balance to the hysterical charges and half-truths conjured by certain elements of our society.

It is one of the founding principles of our organization that people of good will are in a better position to understand the nature of U S intelligence if they are afforded the opportunity to learn more of its history. In the final analysis, where and how such research will be conducted is up to you.

On behalf of the Board of Directors:

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'W. Cassidy', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

William L. Cassidy
President

WLC/hbs

INTRODUCTION.

The Intelligence Studies Foundation, Incorporated (hereafter ISF), is a non-profit, independently established, educational and literary organization, committed to continuing research and instruction in intelligence and special warfare. ISF exists to fulfill several tasks:

1. To collect, preserve, and make available reliable information concerning the specialist interdisciplines of the intelligence profession.
2. To facilitate greater public awareness of the intelligence profession's contributions to the maintenance of national security and public order.
3. To sponsor and engage in research concerning the historical development of information collection, analysis, and tradecraft techniques, and their application in modern history.
4. To make its findings known through workshops and seminars, lectures, films and exhibits, and the periodic dissemination of journals, books and monographs.

PLANS AND PROGRAMS.

On-going ISF programs are selected with the consensus of ISF research associates, and represent a cross-section of interest, background, and experience.

In the coming months, ISF will inaugurate major programs in the following areas:

1. The compilation of a fully indexed catalog of selected open source literature treating intelligence and special warfare, to be published on 98 frame 24:1 microfiche. A basic research tool, designed for both libraries and individuals, the catalog will include bibliographic citations, brief descriptive annotations, and availability information.

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2. The publication of a quarterly journal, devoted to scholarly writing on the human aspects of intelligence work, with emphasis on education and training.

3. An exhibition and lecture program, designed to attract members of the public and awaken their interest in a positive approach to the intelligence profession.

4. The creation of an intelligence reference library and archives. The ISF Archives will collect source material from institutions and former intelligence professionals, and make this material readily available to interested researchers. It is anticipated that the ISF Archives project will consist of three major components:

a. The collection of interviews with key intelligence figures, obtained telephonically and in person, preserved both on standard cassette tapes and in transcription; the collection of primary source documents and the acquisition of diaries, notes, and manuscripts.

b. The cataloging of photographs and descriptive information on special weapons and devices, artifacts and memorabilia, and the acquisition of representative items for display purposes.

c. The development of an information service program. Qualified research workers will undertake to answer specific questions about the intelligence community, utilizing other components of the ISF Archives. This service will be available to serious students of intelligence, journalists, educators and other interested citizens.

PARTICIPATION.

Obviously, a program such as we have here presented cannot succeed without the generous participation of men and women who believe in a fresh approach to the problems of the intelligence community. We invite such participation. ISF requires contributions of time and expertise and the willing assistance of authors, scholars and research workers. Speaking frankly, ISF also requires financial sponsorship. To these ends we have established the following categories of financial contributions:

1. Individual Contributions:

- a. Donor - \$25.
- b. Sponsor - \$50.
- c. Patron - \$150.
- d. Founder - \$500.

2. Company or Institutional Contributions:

- a. Donor - \$150.
- b. Sponsor - \$500.
- c. Patron - \$1,000.
- d. Founder - \$2,500.

We ask your support, and encourage you to send in your contribution. With your help, ISF programs will become a reality from which all may benefit.

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS.

ISF, through its Board of Directors, actively supports the efforts of all reputable non-profit organizations in the intelligence field. These include the Association of Former Intelligence Officers; the National Intelligence Study Center; the National Military Intelligence Association; the Security and Intelligence Fund; Veterans of the Office of Strategic Services, and the Camp X Military Museum Society.